



SARASOTA JAZZ *Sounds*

Winter 2019



Shelly Berg
to perform at the 39th
Annual Sarasota
Jazz Festival

Inside

Multi-talented Shelly Berg

An Interview with Ken Peplowski

*“American Dreamers: Voices of Hope,
Music of Freedom”*

and much more!

Photo courtesy of Wolfgang Schottstaedt



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941.366.1552 • www.jazzclubsarasota.org

The Jazz Club of Sarasota
Sounds is sponsored by



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Dear Members and Friends of the Jazz Club of Sarasota,

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that another year has passed so quickly. If you are anything like me it is a bittersweet holiday with critical reflections of the year gone by, with its successes and limitations, balanced by a thoughtful and determined optimism to do better in the coming year.

One of the saddest moments of 2018 came recently with the passing of a jazz legend, Nancy Wilson. Her body of work puts her in the pantheon of great historic jazz female vocalists with Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan. She had what they all had—a unique engaging style and a command of herself and the music. While we have missed her “live” performances for some time already, we will no doubt endlessly enjoy and celebrate her work. To read her obituary published in *The Guardian* visit www.theguardian.com/music/2018/dec/17/nancy-wilson-obituary

What's New? Quite a few things actually!

We are very happy to announce the launch of the Jazz Club's new website. You will find it at the same, familiar web address: <https://jazzclubsarasota.org>. While the site clearly is visually more appealing, we think it will more importantly better serve our members with improved Events' Postings & Ticketing; timely connections with Jazz Club publications; a clearer membership application process that provides a full 12-month membership regardless of the date of joining; and an easy email communication system. The most exciting innovation in the new website is the Musician Directory. Jazz Club members who are working musicians will have the option of being listed in the Directory with a brief description of their expertise, contact information and a link to their website. This directory will be completely searchable. For example, if you were looking to hire a pianist for an event enter the keyword piano in the search screen and voilà! you have a list of potential players for your event! Pretty cool!

Early in December we announced a campaign to more than double our active membership to 1,000 by 2020. We have already added 75 new members. With the start of the new year we have implemented several new member incentive programs including **Sponsorships by existing members**; an event **Ticket Redemption program** and a **Pay-Your-Age program**. The details of these incentives are on our website.

January also marks the beginning of our new **Monday Night Jazz Cabaret** at Florida Studio Theatre. Five performances over three months with fabulous Florida musicians. Just 100 seats each night in a beautiful cabaret space with a cash bar and cabaret menu available. The first performance on January 14th with Whitney James and *La Lucha* had less than 10 seats remaining as of mid-December. Tickets for the other four performances are also selling briskly. Up-to-date information and tickets can be found on the new Jazz Club website!

I have not taken time here to write about our upcoming Jazz Festival at the Hyatt Hotel set for the first week of March. That information can be found elsewhere in this issue. Suffice it to say that we are very excited about our greatly expanded festival programming and the Hyatt location.

Finally, be sure to renew your membership if you haven't already, and if you have never been a member, Join Up! You'll find an application inside.

Sincerely,



Ed Linehan, President



SHELLY BERG

LEADS THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI BIG BAND
AT THE 39TH ANNUAL SARASOTA JAZZ FESTIVAL

Shelly Berg is a Steinway piano artist and five-time Grammy-nominated arranger, orchestrator, and producer. His album projects *The Deep* (Chesky), *The Nearness of You* (Arbors), *Blackbird* (Concord) and *The Will* (CARS) are critically acclaimed. Berg earned three Grammy nominations in the Best Arrangement Accompanying Vocal(s) category with jazz singer-lyricist Lorraine Feather and international superstar Gloria Estefan, and a fourth Grammy nomination as co-producer of *Gloria Estefan: The Standards* (Sony). He earned his fifth Grammy nomination as co-arranger of “I Loves You Porgy / There's a Boat That's Leavin' Soon for New York” from the album *Rendezvous*

(2018) featuring jazz singers Clint Holmes and Dee Dee Bridgewater with the Count Basie Orchestra. Recent projects include recording and/or performing with Tony Bennett, Seal, Lizz Wright, Andra Day, Clint Holmes, Renée Fleming, and Arturo Sandoval. He is also the host of a monthly radio show *Generation Next* on Sirius XM, music director of *The Jazz Cruise*, and artistic advisor for the Jazz Roots series at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami.

An award-winning educator with 39 years of leadership in higher education, Shelly Berg is dean of the Phillip and Patricia Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. He was

previously the McCoy/Sample Professor of Jazz Studies at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California and a past president of the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE). In 2003 he was

honored as Educator of the Year by the Los Angeles Jazz Society and in 2002 received the *IAJE Lawrence Berk Leadership Award*. In 2000 the Los Angeles Times named him one of three “Educators for the Millennium.”

His textbooks include *Essentials of Jazz Theory*, *the Chop-Monster* beginning improvisation series, *Rhythm Section Workshop for Jazz Directors* (Alfred Music) and *Jazz Improvisation: The Goal-Note Method* (Kendor). He has appeared as a performer and lecturer throughout the United States as well as in Canada, China, Mexico, Europe, Israel, Japan, Romania and Venezuela.

Shelly Berg
is a Steinway piano artist
and five-time Grammy-
nominated arranger,
orchestrator, and
producer.



Photo courtesy of Daniel Azoulay

Excerpt from Shelly Berg website
<http://www.shellyberg.com>



Lil & Louis

*a new play with music
brings a unique love story to the
Jazz Festival on Mar. 4th-5th*

Lillian Hardin played the family's old organ before she could reach the pedals and was church organist at 8, sometimes beating out hymns with a syncopated beat. "I was just born to swing," she said. And swing she did.

Memphis-born Lil found her way to Beale Street, where she learned "the devil's music" and how to use a flirty smile. Her god-fearing mother Decie shipped her off to Nashville's Fisk University to learn proper music and ladylike manners but when the family moved to Chicago, young Lil joined them.

The classically trained pianist (and teen-ager) became the only woman in the New Orleans Creole Jazz Band and later the legendary King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. "The Hot Miss Lil" also had her own bands and was among the most sought-after pianists in Chicago when Joe Oliver's protégé, a country bumpkin called "Little Louis" Armstrong, arrived from New Orleans with his cornet. The rest, as they say, is history.



Jo Morello, Playwright

They wed and became "The First Couple of Jazz" but opposites don't really attract. Louis moved on to two more wives, uncounted mistresses and stardom. Lil never remarried. She continued

her stellar career but is sadly forgotten, although her music lives on. Lil and Louis remained friends until their weeks-apart deaths in 1971.

See their story in a workshop production of *Lil & Louis*, a new play with music, written by Jo Morello and directed by Chuck Smith. For further information visit <http://www.jomorello.com>.



Chuck Smith, Director

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SEVEN QUESTIONS

A Jazz Club Interview With
Ken Peplowski

By Ed Linehan



photo courtesy of Carol LoRicco

EL: Ken, you and your music are very familiar to our readers. Many would like to know more about the beginning of your career.

KP: Okay. You know, it's funny, I've been thinking about this lately, and I think the Beatles made me want to play music, and Duke Ellington made me want to play jazz music specifically. When I was five years old my parents took my brother and me to see *A Hard Day's Night*. I remember

the girls screaming. That made me think somewhere in my five-year-old mind, "Jeez, this is for me!"

My father was an amateur musician and tried different instruments and gave them up in frustration. Because of that my older brother wound up with a trumpet and I wound up with a clarinet. I loved the instrument. We formed a band with other kids. I think I was around 12 when I started playing polkas in Cleveland.

I spent my money buying records, and I started listening to Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington. I still remember the specific Ellington album called *The Great Paris Concert*, which I recommend to everybody. It had all those fantastic players, especially Jimmy Hamilton, who was in some ways a bigger influence on me than Benny. Jimmy to me had the most beautiful clarinet sound. From there it just grew and grew. I listened to more music, started playing with jazz musicians in the area, and you know, the whole world opened up for me.

EL: Benny Goodman hired you to play sax when he came out of retirement in 1984 and you joined his new band. What was that experience like? How old were you?

KP: It was frightening. I was 25 years old. It was mostly a younger band, with a few veterans. I was scared to death. I mean, he was an idol. I'd heard stories about his reputation of being a tough band leader only rivaled by Buddy Rich. I saw that in action. Me and one other saxophone player were the only two not to get fired in the run of that band. He actually was quite nice to me. He tried to get me a record deal before I signed with Concord.

EL: What did that opportunity mean to you at that point in your career?

KP: It was a big deal for us to have played with him. It was a milestone. But New York is a funny place. Nothing moves in a straight line. I could be playing with Benny one night in 1984 or '85, and then Saturday night I'm playing somebody's wedding and getting yelled at. It took a while to feel like I arrived.

EL: If you fast-forward to today, how would you describe your style, or your take on jazz?

KP: I so hate categories, and little boxes. I do like to play all kinds of music and all jazz music, too. I consider myself an interpreter of songs, using improvisation as my tool of interpretation. I can play a Cole Porter song or I can play a song written by John Lennon if I can find a way into it. I don't like to think of putting on a 1930s hat and, "Now I'm going to play Benny Goodman;" and then put on a 1960s hat to play a modal piece by Coltrane. It's all one and the same, as far as I'm concerned. It's just finding stuff that I like to play, material that means something to me, and then hopefully will mean something to other people. I try to find like-minded musicians that think the same way.

EL: Do you have a dream gig or project, one that hasn't happened yet, that one day you hope to make happen?

KP: You know, nothing specific, except there is always something coming around the corner. That's the beauty of it. Trying to stay open to new possibilities and lots of different experiences. I learned that lesson from Dick Hyman. He's been a model of that for everybody. Dick and I will play a duo gig, and we'll play a Jelly Roll Morton song and then he'll turn to me and say, "Now let's play something free."

My goal for the future is staying open to things I never knew existed. For example, in the last few years, I've started playing a lot more classical music. This year I need to learn Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*, and the Bartok Contrasts. Dick Hyman wrote a concerto for me. It's challenging. I wouldn't have predicted that I'd be doing all that.

continued p.8

Last year I produced, arranged and played a lot of the instruments on a record by a Brazilian guitarist that we're trying to find an American label for, but it was more of a pop album through my jazz sensibilities. I picked these quirky songs for him by people like Paul McCartney, Harry Nilsson, and some by British pop artists. Very different work for me.

Of course, I also like putting together big packaged concepts. Which is why I enjoy doing the themes for the recent Sarasota Jazz Festivals.

EL: We are very happy that you will once again serve as music director for the mainstage concerts at this year's *Generations of Jazz Festival* in March. There are many familiar names in the lineup. Could you tell us a bit about some of the lesser-known "next generation" talent that you have assembled?

KP: I would say 80% to 90% of the people I book, I've probably played with before. But it's the ones that you're just discovering for the first time that, in some ways, are the most exciting. Let's start with James Suggs, a young trumpet player who recently signed with Arbors Records. Houston Person produced his first record. I was knocked out when I started checking out his playing.

Among the reed players there's Aaron Johnson, a kind of protégé of mine. He covers a lot of territory. He can play traditional jazz and more contemporary jazz. He's got a real interest in West Coast jazz, which for a young player is a real head-turner. And we have Roxy Coss, who I met while playing with the *DIVA* band. She has a record out that's been making some waves. I'm happy to have them both at the festival.



photo courtesy of Carol LoRicco

Charles Turner is a vocalist people have been telling me about for a while. I checked him out online. And then, funny enough, he came to Birdland when I worked there, and sat in for a couple tunes. Just a fantastic singer, and a real magnetic personality, too.

Then there's *La Lucha* providing the rhythm section. A lot of people in Florida know about them. Great young guys.



Ken with Dick Hyman at the Jazz Club 2017 Festival Gala.

They're so open to playing any kind of music. It's very refreshing to meet younger musicians like that.

EL: Last question Ken. Is there any truth to the rumor that being a musician was your second career choice, and that your true calling was as a standup comedian?

KP: I would never, ever, try to be a comedian. That's the hardest gig in the world. What I do onstage is another thing. I toss lines working off of the audience, and sometimes I'll get on a roll. The one time I tried to do this was for the LA Jazz Institute. This lady calls me up, and she says, "We'd like you to play for our annual fundraiser, and could you host the evening? Also, we want you to do some comedy routines during the auctions, etc." I said, "No, I don't do that." She says, "No, no, no. everyone loves you. They all think you're funny." Famous last words!

So, I took the job, very reluctantly. Got onstage. My very first joke bombed so bad that the room got quieter than before I started. Jeff Hamilton was on drums that night. He and I have a history of ribbing and insulting each other. He was enjoying this so much, he wouldn't help me out at all. He just sat in the back with his arms crossed and shaking his head.

Listen, it was so bad they couldn't even auction off a puppy. It was a horrible evening. That's a long way of saying, no, there is no second life as a comedian. If I can make people laugh occasionally, that's great. I really respect those guys. That's a tough job.

EL: We certainly have enjoyed your spontaneous banter in past festivals and look forward to it again this March. Ken, we want to thank you for your time today.

KP: Hey, thanks. This was fun.

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DIGGING INTO THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE WITHIN THE MUSIC

A review of the "American Dreamers: Voices of Hope, Music of Freedom"

By Ken Franckling

Jazz has a longstanding element as a music of social commentary when needed. Classic examples include the collaboration by Louis Armstrong, Dave and Iola Brubeck, Carmen McRae and Lambert, Hendricks & Ross on *The Real Ambassadors* in 1961, as well as *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite* with the drummer's then-wife Abbey Lincoln.

Now add John Daversa to the list. The Miami-based trumpeter, bandleader and educator produced one of the United States' most culturally significant recordings of 2018. The project's important messages are touchstones of optimism with a scope that extends way beyond jazz--and way beyond music.

American Dreamers: Voices of Hope, Music of Freedom (BFM Jazz) features the John Daversa Big Band supplemented by 53 so-called "Dreamers"--undocumented young people who were brought to the U.S. as children and have grown up with American culture and values.

Daversa and his production team worked with nonprofit immigrant organizations to find Dreamers who could share their stories through music. The young singers, rappers and instrumentalists who signed on for the project live in 17 states - and had roots in 17 different countries around the globe. Those homelands are Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia,

Honduras, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Senegal, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden and Venezuela.



John Daversa

Daversa chairs the Studio Music and Jazz Department at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music. He drafted professional musicians from Miami, Los Angeles and New York for his big band. The Dreamers selected for this project performed solos, instrumental accompaniments, spoken word poetry, percussion grooves, lead vocals, choruses and some raps. Each of the CD's nine tunes is preceded by a Dreamer's narration of his or her individual story.

The featured music includes "Living in America," "Don't Fence Me In," Led Zeppelin's "Immigrant Song," Woody Guthrie's "Deportee" (Plane Wreck at Los Gatos), two patriotic classics - John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" and Katharine Lee Bates and Samuel Ward's "America the Beautiful," "America" from *West Side Story*, and two Daversa originals - the hopeful and optimistic "All is One" and "Red White and Remixed."

The project's treatment of "America" from *West Side Story* is unusual and stunning. It's an all-percussion version, on which big-band member Murph Aucamp brought together more than a dozen Dreamers who added multiple layers of exotic rhythm.



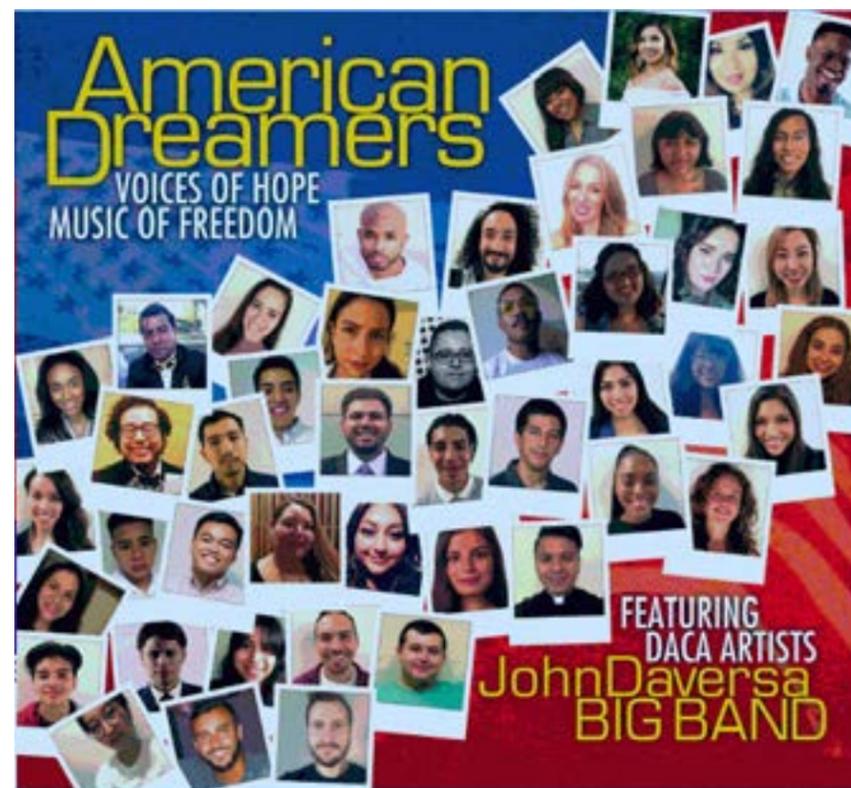
John Daversa conducting a group of Dreamers.

Many of the stories will make you pause and think about the challenges these talented young people have endured and continue to face. Six years ago, the so-called Dreamers received temporary status through the Deferred Action for Childhood Early Arrivals policy. It was rescinded in 2017, creating a limbo of sorts for 800,000 DACA recipients, 90 percent of whom are in school or have jobs.

Juan Carlos Alarcon Moscoso, who performs on pipe organ, piano and percussion, talked about his challenges as a student musician and a Dreamer. "I don't think unity comes from everybody being the same, but respecting people's differences. I think that's the real unity of America."

Another Dreamer musician trombonist, Denzel Mendoza, who lives in Oregon, came to the U.S. from Singapore at age 5 with his family from Singapore. He says the project "opened my eyes on how far I could take my musical career."

American Dreamers is a balm of sorts amid the challenges and rage that have been going on across the U.S. about immigration in general - both legal and illegal. That tragic situation is not what America is deep down inside.



In December, John Daversa's *American Dreamers* received three Grammy Award nominations - for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album, Best Jazz Solo ("Don't Fence Me In") and Best Arrangement ("Stars and Stripes Forever").

Jazzlinks

Embracing Our Differences

By Nancy Roucher



Greensboro by Naquee White, Greensboro, North Carolina

Students from all seven Sarasota High Schools will learn about the history of the Civil Rights movement through theater, music and a visual artwork that is part of the 2019 *Embracing Our Differences Exhibit* (EOD). Triad School is new to the program this year.

This is the fourth year for the successful collaboration between the Jazz Club of Sarasota, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe (WBTT) and Sarasota County Schools. The curriculum was

developed by an expert in social studies to guide teachers through Civil Rights primary and secondary sources focusing on school segregation and integration, marches, protests, sit-ins and civil rights leaders. History comes to life through music and performers of jazz, gospel and soul, portrayed by WBTT actors. Featured music includes *Black and Blue* (Louis Armstrong), *Alabama* (John Coltrane), *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free* (Billy Taylor and Dick Dallas) and other selections.

Nancy Roucher, *Jazzlinks* coordinator, who is also involved in the EOD exhibit, thought that *Greensboro* by Naquee White would be an ideal component for this year's curriculum. The artwork was selected as one of the 45 billboard-sized panels to be displayed at Bayfront Park from Jan. 19th - March 15th. The artist interpreted the famous photo from the Civil Rights movement, depicting the sit-in held at Woolworth's lunch counter on Feb. 1, 1960, in Greensboro, N.C. It shows four African-American men taking a stand for racial equality by sitting at a "Whites Only" lunch counter with words added as clues. Teachers will introduce the artwork in the classroom and students will have an opportunity to see it magnified in the exhibit.

Teachers use Document-Based Questions to engage the students in the curriculum content. Recent national educational studies have indicated a lack of knowledge about the Civil Rights movement in American classrooms. Students have been responsive to the content, especially in connection with Sarasota history and their own family stories.

In January and February eight actors from WBTT will perform a short musical play, *We Shall Overcome*, in classroom sessions at each high school. Written by Joey James, WBTT education program coordinator, the play deals with an incident of racial profiling in a grocery store today. The plot recounts historical instances of discrimination in a style connecting to today's cellphone culture.

In March WBTT will tour each of the seven high schools with a culminating performance reiterating major events in the Civil Rights movement through music, dance and dialogue. Nate Jacobs, founder, producer and artistic director of WBTT, created the show.

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Check the web site for updated list of performers and venues.

Wristbands required for trolley and admittance to venues.

JAZZ

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Jazz Club Launches New Website

A New Look with New Features, Same Address

www.jazzclubsarasota.org



The screenshot above captures the “Welcome” page for the Jazz Club’s new website launched at the start of 2019. In addition to having a more modern look and more information, users will have an easier time finding what they are looking for! This site will also work better on cellphones and other hand-held devices used by more than half of our members to access Jazz Club information. The site is fully functional now and will continue to be refined and improved as we learn from using it!

WEBSITE FEATURES:

- Master Calendar of All Events with Ticketing
- Directory of JCS Member Musicians with Contact Information
- Online Membership Enrollment Options
- Event Photo Gallery
- Scholarship Fund / Sponsor / Donor Pages
- Recent Copies of “Sarasota Jazz Sounds”
- President’s Newsletter
- Links to Lots of Useful Information

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- Reduced admission to most Jazz Club events: \$330 in potential discounts during the 2018-19 season!
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- Weekly Eblasts of local jazz events.
- General member support provided by the office staff.
- A new Jazz Club website with a dedicated member page, and a musician directory with contact information of member musicians for private parties and other events.
- Event/ticket assistance programs.
- Member meetings and surveys to identify high-interest performers and types of programs.
- Free rides to & from Jazz Club events provided by iTNSunCoast.
- Free luxury bus transportation to and from Ft. Lauderdale to The Jazz Cruise in January. Plus additional Jazz Cruise on board perks. The transportation and on board perks provided by the Jazz Cruise promoters.
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_____ I would like to volunteer for the Jazz Club of Sarasota. Please select one or more areas below.

_____ Membership _____ Jazz at Two _____ Jazz Festival or Outdoor Concerts _____ Office Help

Please also list any special expertise (i.e., tech, speaking, etc.). _____

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